

2105315964

F 2056.73 G72 B72 1983 LAC

**LIBRARY  
USE ONLY**

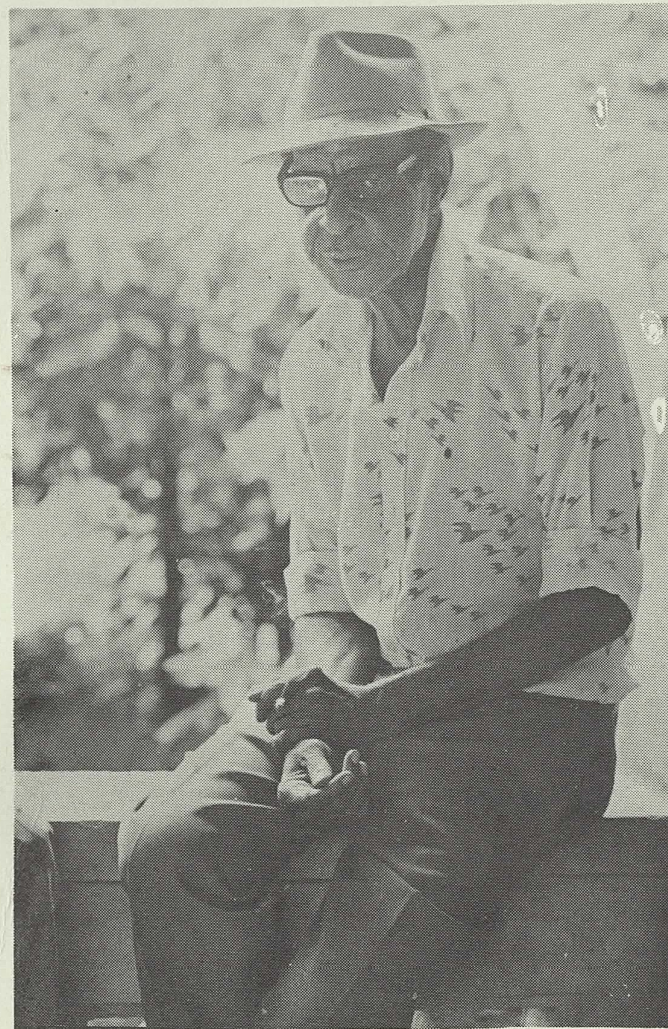


**THE  
NETTIE LEE BENSON  
LATIN AMERICAN COLLECTION**

of  
The General Libraries  
University of Texas  
at Austin

GR481 SP  
25

**CACADEMO GRANT**



**Hero of the People's Revolution**



CACADEMO GRANT 0258676  
Hero of the People's Revolution

A C P E P R O D U C T I O N

Author: Shirley Romain Brathwaite

Date : June 19, 1983.

PRINTERS:

Government Printery, Grenada.

## *CACADEMO - HIS EARLY LIFE*

Mc Godden Kerensky "Cacademo" Grant - a real struggler for working class justice and a true example of revolutionary courage and commitment.

"Cacademo" was born in Gouyave, Grenada on the 16th July, 1917, the year of the first great Socialist Revolution. Cacademo grew up in an environment which was rich with the spirit of active commitment to the struggles of the exploited poor and unemployed. His father Charles Augustus Grant was a man with an internationalist perspective about working class struggles; he read widely and had a deep admiration for the world's first great Socialist Revolution. Together with T. Albert Marryshow, Cacademo's father started the first Working Men and Women's Association. Many were the discussions taking place in his father's home and shop, concerning working class struggle at the time.

Is it surprising therefore, that Kerensky "Cacademo" Grant became an active trade unionist even before he was fifteen? That he deeply admired T. Albert Marryshow? Was a lifelong disciple of Butler? A biting critic of Gairy and a committed fighter for the New Jewel Movement?

Cacademo, the fighter was recognised very early in his youth. He attended the St. John's Primary School at an early age and later, the Grammar School in St. George's for three years. There, he became a keen sportsman and excelled in the field of football and cricket. He emerged as the 'outstanding back' on the Gouyave football team for years, and was con-





Cacademo and his family

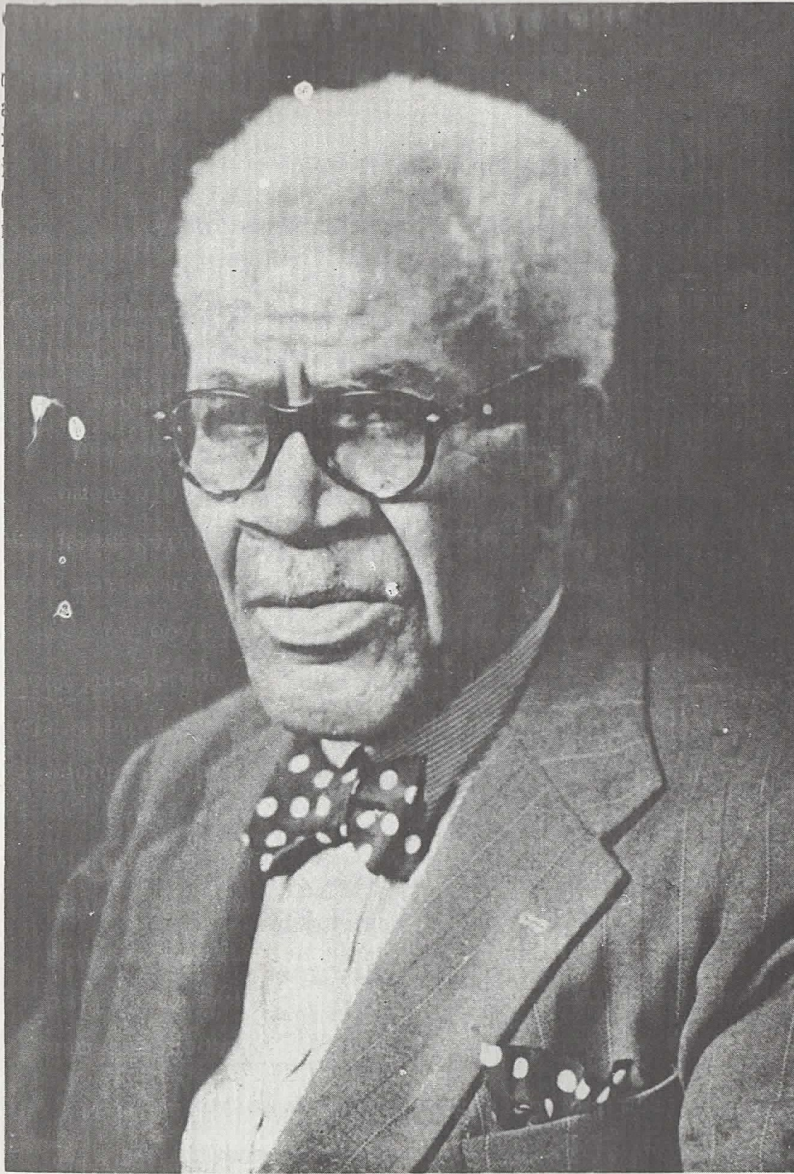
sidered a good 'opening bowler' in cricket. As a sportsman, Cacademo played with a determined spirit which earned him the nick-name "Cacademo" (devil shit) for the rest of his life.

Throughout his years at the Grammar School, Cacademo lived in Tyrrel Street, St. George's with T. Albert Marryshow. His close comrade during those years was Julien Marryshow the son of T. Albert Marryshow. There was a time too, when, because of his mothers ill-health, the entire family lived in St. George's opposite Marryshows' own house and Cacademo spent a lot of his time with his friend Julien Marryshow. To Cacademo, T. Albert Marryshow was more like a 'godfather' whom he liked and admired tremendously.

Cacademo was a warm and affectionate person who has been described as 'homely'. He was very close to the other members of his family and assumed a protective role towards his other brothers and sisters. Although he had to live in St. George's during his three years at the Grammar School for example, he always returned to his family and friends in Gouyave on the week-ends. After leaving Grammar School, it was easy for him to adjust to his own community in Gouyave again.

"Demo" as he was affectionately called, has been described as an "electrifying" public speaker, one





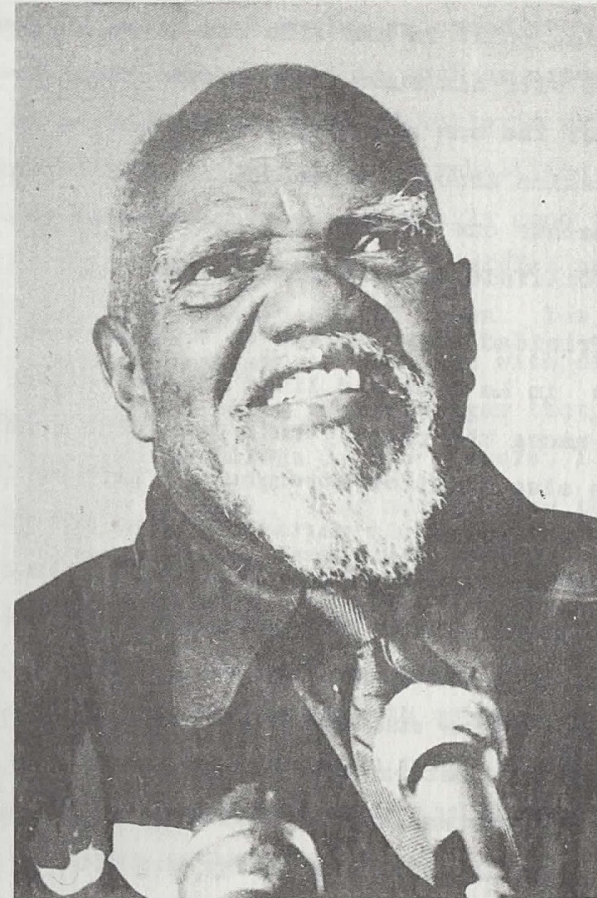
T. A. Marryshow---greatly admired by Cacademo

with an incredible wit. He had a keen insight into the working class struggle and, using images drawn from their experiences, he expressed his ideas and messages to them with a rare clarity and humour which indicated a deep understanding and empathy with his audience. His public speaking career began in his early teens, when he became a member of the St. John's Literary League and gained his first experiences in public speaking and debating. At the age of 14 he became a member of the Working Men and Women's Association of Grenada and influenced many of his friends from the Literary League to join as well.

Demo was known as a proud and independent man and those characteristics seemed to have propelled and clarified the revolutionary direction that his life was to take. After leaving school, Mc Godden Kerensky "Cacademo" Grant applied for a government post in the Agricultural Department as a field officer in the Western District. He did not succeed in getting that job and he felt that he was unfairly discriminated against in favour of an applicant whose complexion was less dark. He had come face to face with a "full bloom" Crown Colony System in which the white and off-white planter class controlled both the government and the economy. Never again did Demo apply for a job with the government and, instead managed 100 acres of leased land for his father. During that time, his involvement with the agricultural workers made him keenly aware of, and concerned about,



their poor working conditions - the long and arduous work day they endured, much exploited and with very little benefits. Young, restless and disenchanted, Demo eventually decided to leave Grenada.



Tubal Uriah Butler---Cacademo's No. 1 Mentor



## *CACADEMO IN TRINIDAD*

In 1941, at the age of twenty four, Cacademo left Grenada for Trinidad. This decision was to be a turning point in his life for there he came in contact with his number one mentor Tubal Uriah Buzz Butler the man who fought colonialism, racism, and oppression through trade union organisation; and who became one of the first leaders of the Trinidad Oilfield Workers Trade Union.

In Trinidad, Demo worked as a plumber on the Oilfields in La Brea and lived in the village of Fyzabad among the closely knit Grenadian community which was also a Butler stronghold. Life on the Oilfields was difficult particularly so for the immigrants, who were doubly exploited because of their immigrant status. They also had to withstand persistent anti immigrant hostility coming from the local Trinidadians and expatriate whites. Many had hoped to make a better life for themselves in Trinidad but instead, faced disillusionment and hardship. Butler with his energy and optimism had given them a new lease on life and they learnt from him that "without life's struggle none do ye attain."

When Demo arrived in Trinidad in 1941, Butler was in prison and his working class followers were agitating for his release. Marryshow visited

Trinidad in the same year and he encouraged the workers to be more persistent in their demands for Butler's release. In fact, the stage was set for the part that Cacademo was to play in the working class movement in Trinidad. He was instrumental in the movement to have Butler released from prison and after his release in 1946 he often spoke on Butler's platform. He admired Butler's great store of optimistic energy, his capabilities as an orator and agitator, his exceptionally good organisational abilities, his strict principles and his obsession with discipline at all times. Yes, Demo greatly respected the man who replied with dignity to an accusation of being a mere beggar that "so long as the workers remain in the gutters, I will lift them up on my back. I am not leaving them there and come out! Let them cling unto my back and when once I am sure they are out, then I too will get out."

Cacademo despised Gairy with as much passion as he admired Butler. The rise to political power of Eric Matthew Gairy in Grenada in the 1950's was closely observed by both Butler and Demo. Around 1953, Gairy met with Butler and the nature of the discussion made Butler conclude that "this man is a rogue!" Although at the time, working class support for "Uncle" Gairy was very strong, Butler, always an astute man, recognised that he was dealing with



a man who would sell out the working class struggles. In short, and in Butler's own words "a common West Indian traitor of the greatest magnitude, Eric Matthew Gairy!" Likewise, Demo dismissed him as a pseudo-revolutionary - an aimless opportunist "having no feelings for anyone, neither for worker, nor friend or enemy - just for himself alone."

In the years to follow, Cacadero was to face the full onslaught of Gairyism as he battled long and hard towards Gairy's downfall.

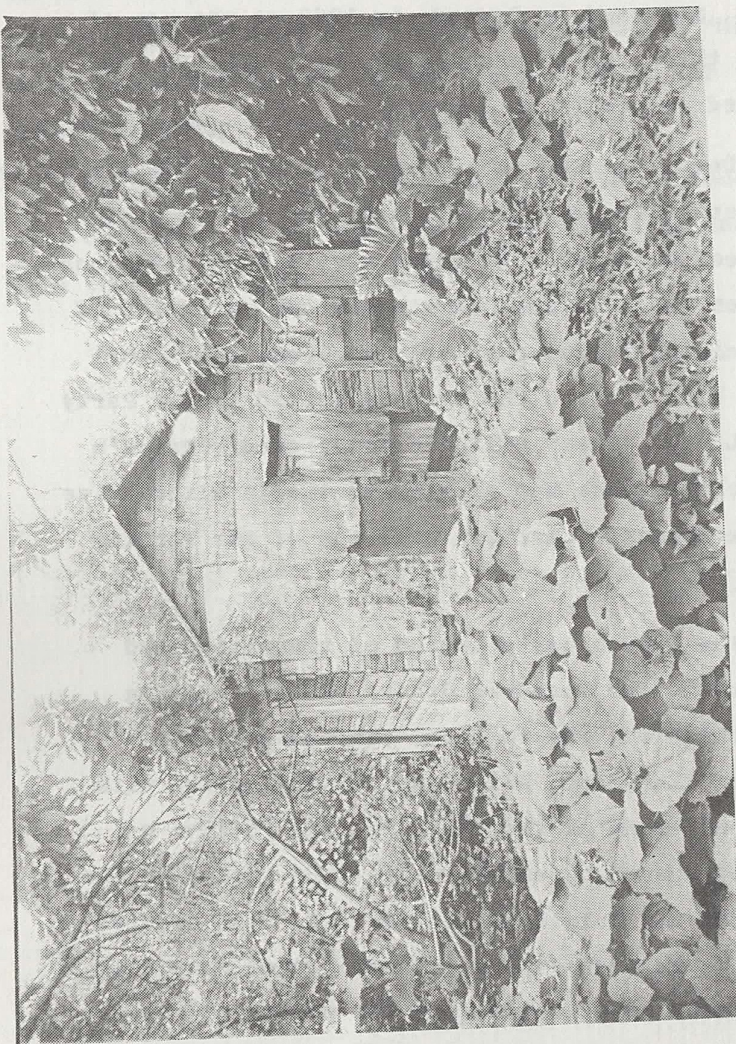
## CACADERO RETURNS TO GRENADA

Cacadero Grant a true champion of the working class, returned to Grenada in 1960 at the age of forty three, to attend his mother's funeral. He decided to remain in Grenada.

Demo returned to a Grenada in which the militancy and revolutionary enthusiasm of the 1951 uprising had been betrayed. He found very little difference between the political strategies and direction of the main political parties, the Grenada National Party (G.N.P.) and the Grenada United Labour Party (G.U.L.P.). Their policies benefitted Grenada's tiny elite class and offered no viable alternative to the oppression and exploitation of the working class.

The 1960's was a period of transition and adjustment for Cacadero Grant. His overriding preoccupations was to fight the cause of the working class and, his close identification with the conditions of the poor, led him to live a life of austerity and hardship. He worked on the Lorretto and Belvidere estates and, when offered a job as an overseer he refused. Demo wanted a first hand understanding of the misery of the agricultural workers and his intention was to work





Cacadero's home---a symbol of his austere life

and struggle among the working people - a base from which he could begin his political work among the working class. In an interview with Comrade George Louison, he observed:

"From the time I knew Demo he was an agricultural worker and that to me, was one of the most fundamental aspects of the man's life and his position. Demo's interest was never in owning property, he wanted to be a worker, and he was a worker all through his life."



## *A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION*

In the 1970's, a number of progressive movements were formed in Grenada. There was the Black Power Movement which, with its strong racial component, blatantly challenged the class/colour basis of the society.

"That was the time in which Marcus Garvey and a number of the other Black Caribbean leaders of the early 1900's were beginning to come into prominence. I was startled by how much Demo knew about them in 1970. At that time a group of us was starting a Black Power Movement in St. John's area and Demo was a valuable source of information on Garvey and Padmore and a number of other black Caribbean leaders." (Interview - George Louison)

A number of different organisations came out of the 1970's Black Power period. It was around that time that the Movement for the Assemblies of the People (M.A.P.) and the Jewel (Joint Endeavour for Welfare, Education and Liberation) were founded.

Gairy responded to any such progressive movements at the time with fear and open antagonism, making his undercover Mongoose gang the mainspring of his repressive measures. A number of conflicts with the Gairy Government occurred and his intimidation increased with merciless consequences for the victims.

However, as Gairy's intimidation increased, the progressive oppositions refined their political strategies and defined their political goals more clearly. They began serious work among the rural

estate workers and peasants, attempting to show the contradictions between Gairy's populist rhetoric and his anti-worker policies. March 1973 was the turning point in the history of Grenada, when M. A. P. and J. E. W. E. L. merged to form the New Jewel Movement (N. J. M.). From then on, events moved rapidly towards a crisis situation and the People's revolution which occurred in 1979.



*"DEMO" - A TRUE REVOLUTIONARY*

A true revolutionary, Cacademo was keenly sensitive to the political pulse and mood of the time. He had had superficial contact with the Grenada National Party (G. N. P.) speaking on one or two of their village platforms, but obviously not a revolutionary party, Demo was not interested in close affiliation with it.

In 1973 after the launching of the N. J. M., a series of meetings were held around the country. At that time, at the end of meetings, members of the public were asked to say a few words if they wished. At a meeting in Concord, Demo responded, took the microphone and made a speech. Reminiscing on that occasion, Comrade Louison called it "a bombshell speech".

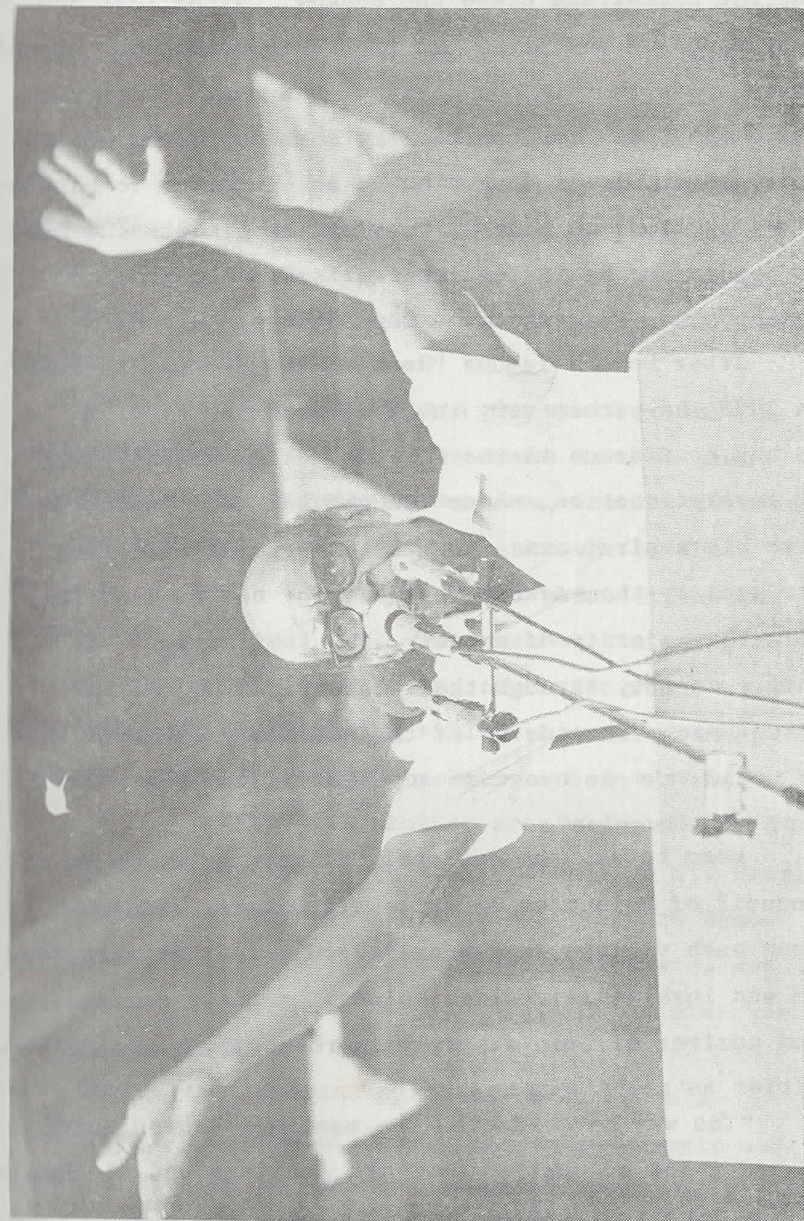
In that speech, Demo made full use of his ability to draw on folk images to express his ideas and messages:

"He gave the example of a family that had a piece of land. Every day the land was cultivated but there was someone who was tying their donkey on that land. One day, the son went up in the land and saw this donkey tied there so he untied the donkey, let it go and said 'go home'. The next day, the father went up and saw the same donkey tied to the same picket\* so he untied the donkey, gave it a good plan-ass\*\* and say "get out, don't come back!" Next day the wife went up and

---

\* A piece of iron or tree stump rooted in the ground.

\*\* A blow with the broadside of a cutlass.



DEMO---a characteristic pose



saw a donkey on the same picket and she get so mad, she aint worry to untie the donkey, she just root out the picket and chase the donkey. After that nobody else had any picket to tie their donkey on. Demo's example was that is one party to the next. Once you leave the basis for capitalism, somebody would always come and tie their donkey on it so, in order to change the situation, we have to root up the picket. We have to remove the basis for imperialism to continue to dominate us." (Interview - Cde. George Louison)

After Demo's famous "Root of the Picket" speech in 1973, he became very involved with the N. J. M. He had confidence in the N. J. M. as an organisation of revolutionaries, whose fundamental goals coincided with his aspirations - to make everything affecting the society the workers' business for not only do they form the majority of society, but they support the entire society through their labour. "N. J. M." he often said, "is made up of the necessary material that it would take to overcome any kind of problems, any kind of struggles"

Demo became the National Chairman of N. J. M. Council of Delegates on which all the key leaders from each village were represented. In that capacity, he was invaluable, Valdon Boldeau, a close comrade, and admirer of Demo was very impressed by his capabilities as a chairman:

"The way he conducted the meetings showed that he had a lot of control over the meetings and, I thought at the time that there was no-one else who could 'chair' a meeting as effectively as Demo. He was

always prepared to maintain discipline at all times and I think that he was an example to most of the comrades. Yes, comrades really learnt to chair meetings based on Demo's example in the Council of Delegates meetings."

Cacademo's involvement with the N. J. M. was total. His life style continued to be austere and completely disciplined and committed to the overthrow of Gairism. Towards this end, he worked unceasingly for the N. J. M. As a political activist, his indomitable will was unsurpassed.

"Demo was the kind of man who would go into an area, maybe spend two or three weeks in that area with the people, working among them, talking to them, feeling them out and getting the message of the N. J. M. across. He had no qualms about attempting a long and difficult task. I remember him going to Darvey, Prospect, and spending about two weeks with the fishermen and with the villagers working among them and strengthening the political base of the N. J. M. Birchgrove is another area where he did a lot of work and there were many villages in St. Patrick's, St. Mark's and the West Coast generally where Demo, by internalising the whole workings of the area was able to win key support for the N. J. M." (Interview - Cde. George Louison)

There are numerous examples of Cacademo's commitment and revolutionary zeal. One example was when, in trying to escape the brutality of Gairy's Mongoose Gang, he had to sleep in a pig pen among the pigs for two nights. Demo's courage remained constant



through many dangerous situations with the N. J. M.

"I recall many meetings where we got stoned by the Gairyites especially during the early 1973 - 1974 period. We got stoned in Marian, in Chantimelle, in Waltham in many different meetings. In those days, we had to contend with Gairy's 'greenbeasts' and the secret police and it was a dangerous task trying to get the word of the party out in this period.

On several occasions we had to carry meetings through a lot of stones and all the time our political line and the messages we brought to the people were winning us more and more support. In fact, after a while our supporters in the villages began fighting back and we won village after village. I remember occasions with Demo when villages became split 50/50 after a time. We 'cracked' Chantimelle, one of the strongest Gairy areas and after a while the support tilted in our favour. We 'cracked' Marian, Vendome, La Tante, where, after a while, there was a bloc of support that became Jewel. Demo was one of our main speakers in the meetings all over the country."

(Interview - Cde. George Louison)

Demo's influence on the Political scene in those days cannot be overemphasised. His speeches and discussions always laced with the history of Grenada and the Caribbean made him, not only an outstanding orator but a great teacher as well. Comrade Valdon Boldeau emphasised this fact:

"One thing that really impressed me about Demo was that he knew a lot of history. Although when I knew him I never saw him reading because his eyes

were very bad, I always got the impression that in his youth he did quite a lot of reading, listened to the news closely and was always involved in progressive discussions. He taught me a lot of history about slavery, about the abolition movement, and about Fedon. He knew a lot about the actual historical facts around St. John's. Jebbett for example, an area in Clozier is an area where he said Jebbett, a general in Fedon's army was killed. He taught me also that ninety-one, a place in Belvidere was where Fedon and his soldiers killed ninety-one soldiers of the British army."

Above all, Demo was very good at exposing Gairy and Gairyism even to the most "die hard" Gairyites. A good listener as well as speaker, he was ready to listen but he was also very firm in trying to "manners" the backward ideas. His approach always won, if not support, at least a certain degree of respect. His achievements in the agricultural and pro-Gairy village of Clozier was particularly outstanding as the first hand account by Comrade Boldeau indicates:

"Progressive ideas were not a feature of the village for it was a pro-Gairyite area. I had the orientation of a Gairyite and the first thing that Demo told me about Gairy was that he was a hypocrite especially in the light of the 1951 struggle. Demo who had a clear understanding of the 1951 working class struggle was able to point out to me that Gairy had betrayed the workers in 1951. He showed me that the workers had had a more revolutionary approach and that their

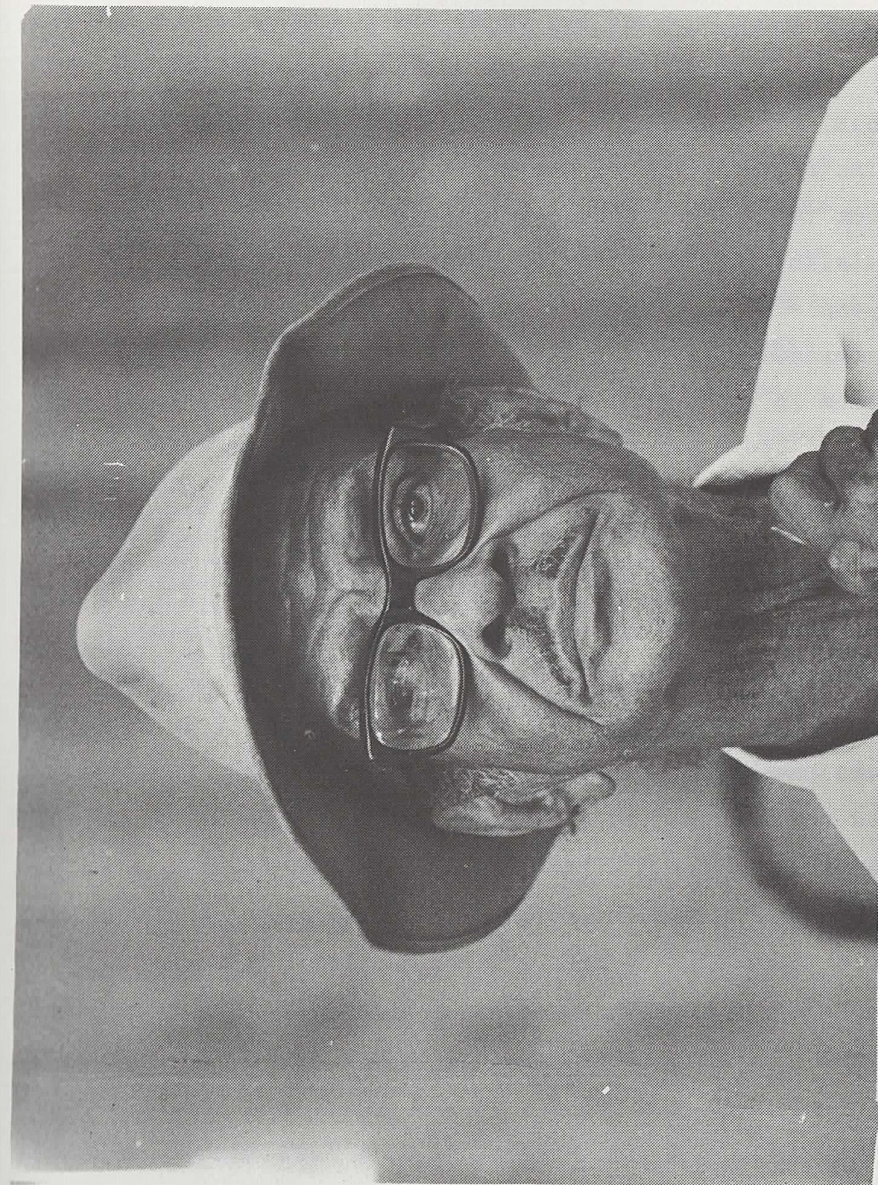


struggle was made less revolutionary by Gairy. What he was able to show me as well was the way in which Gairy had used the working people of Grenada and exploited them in his interest. He was able to point out the fact of Gairy's business enterprises around the place and to expose the corruption of the Ministers. He also exposed Gairy and his Mongoose gang activities to me. Always opposed to injustice and based on Demo's explanation, I was able to draw a clear line between right and wrong and so was able to come forward on the side of the N. J. M. struggle."

Clearly, Demo's persistent political work had other far-reaching results. His revolutionary spirit was an example to many comrades who today are some of the most committed workers in our People's revolution.

Cacademo Grant was a very happy man after the 1979 revolution:

"He was always happy to say that he helped to destroy Gairyism. I think it was one of the greatest achievements of any revolutionary at the point in time and at that age. He was always ready to carry on the fight against Gairy, no matter if his life was threatened, no matter if he had to run and hide and duck and sleep in bush. He was determined and he did succeed in seeing the removal of Gairy." (Interview - Valdon Boldeau)



CACADEMO



## CACADEMO AND THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION

After the people's revolution of 1979, Cacadero continued working for the revolution with as much zest as his age and health would allow:

"Although when the revolution came he was quite old, he remained active as any youth, assisting in the organisation of the militia, assisting by going out to public meetings and doing "house to house" visits explaining the goals of the revolution to the people. Many times he would be among the militia comrades discussing with them and helping to assist them in any way he could. He always said that even if he could not be in the front line he could at least assist in cooking food. Militia meetings were held on Wednesdays and there was not a Wednesday that Demo would be absent from a militia meeting. He would always be there ready to discuss the revolutionary process with comrades as they came along. At times he made very good presentations in the militia meetings and was generally influential in determining the character of the militia and the character of the comrades involved in the militia." (Interview - Valdon Boldeau)

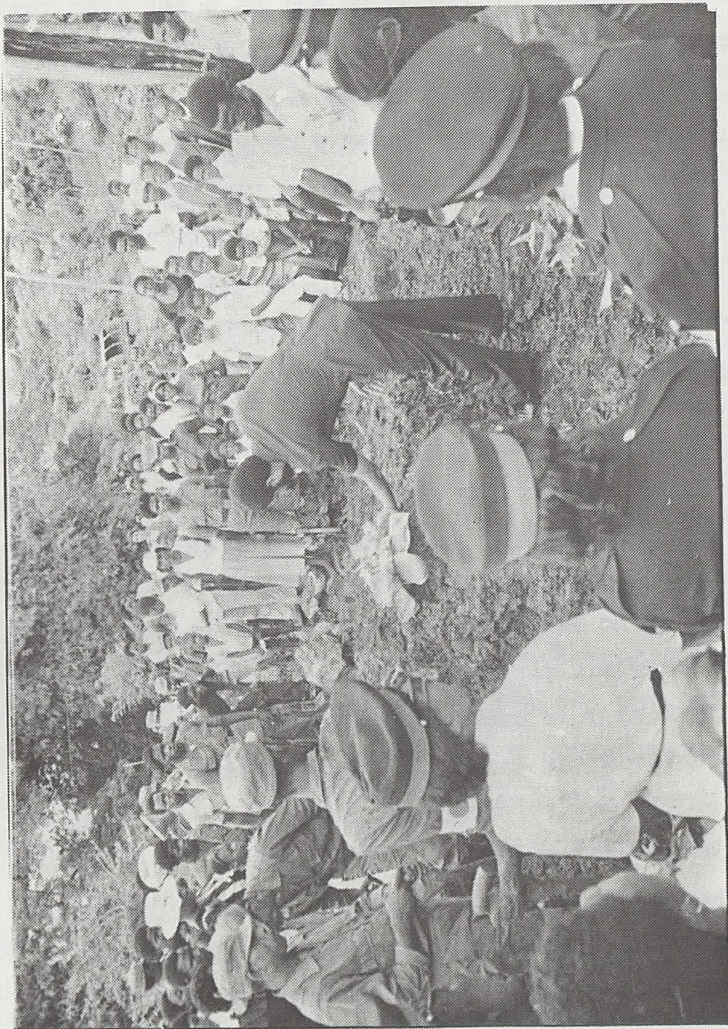
The revolutionary process in Grenada was viewed with suspicion by some governments and with open antagonism by others, particularly the U. S. government. Reagan's preoccupation with tiny Grenada excited Demo's ready humour and he gave his interpretation of Reagan's reaction in the story of the "Red Ant in Reagan's Eye". Comrade Louison recounts:

"He said that Maurice is like the red ant in Reagan's eye. There was this hunter travelling through a forest and he met up a lion that try to block his way and he pull out his sword and break a big tree and defeat the lion. He met up a big tree that fell across his path and he just pull out his hand axe, cut it down and clear the way. He meet up a big river and he was able to grab a rope and swing across the river but, as he was going, a red ant went in his eye and all that he did, he couldn't get rid of the red ant in his eye. He had to run and get somebody to help him and say "come, come, blow this red ant out of my eye for me". He couldn't do anything about it."

In this story, Demo aimed at encouraging comrades to continue struggling in the interest of the revolution, in spite of the open antagonism of the world's mightiest military power, the U. S. A.

Cacadero struggled through three of the most difficult years of the revolution. During those years, there were several attempts to destabilise and overthrow the People's Revolutionary Government (P. R. G.) One such occasion was the bomb blast which occurred on June 19, 1980 at a rally in honour of the memories of two Grenadian heroes: Tubal Uriah Butler, the trade union leader and Alister Strachan, martyr of the struggle against Gairy. In fact, Demo was addressing the crowd at the time when the massive explosion brought stunned silence and then utter chaos and hysteria. Three young women were killed and one hundred people injured, not to mention





Prime Minister Bishop laying wreath on Cacadero's grave

the minor injuries of many others.

On December 16, 1982, McGodden Kerensky "Cacadero" Grant died at the age of sixty-six years. One of the most outstanding things about Cacadero was his consistent contribution to the working class struggles both in Trinidad and Grenada. As Comrade Boldeau emphasised:

"Demo was prepared for change by any means necessary and he practically participated in all the means that were organised to get rid of Gairy. He participated in forming groups, educating the people, in election campaigns and in strikes and demonstrations that were organised. He participated in the military overthrow of the Gairy regime. In my view, he was a man, firm in his convictions and actions."